



UW Oshkosh: Community Catalyst in a Challenging Economy Executive Summary

Prepared by Chancellor Richard Wells

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The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's faculty, staff, students and alumni are economic and community development catalysts. They help regional enterprises overcome economic obstacles and communities thrive. Since 2000, UW Oshkosh has been able to dramatically grow its enrollment and increase the annual number of degree-holding graduates by 27 percent, from 1,700 to more than 2,150. Every year, we infuse our economy with these new waves of career-ready graduates. In addition to the artists, communicators, social scientists and creative entrepreneurs finding new opportunities and niches in this diverse economy, nearly three-fourths of all our 2010-11 degrees awarded – about 1,500 -- were specific professional, career-ready or science, technology, engineering and math-based (STEM) baccalaureate degrees. We are infusing our state with creativity, talent, skill and energy the workforce demands.

- **In total, nearly 72 percent of UW Oshkosh baccalaureate graduates earned specific professional career-ready and STEM degrees in the last academic year.** All UW Oshkosh graduates are career-ready economic contributors. However, in 2010-11, more than 62 percent of undergraduate degrees earned (about 1,300) were specific baccalaureate degrees in high-demand fields such as accounting, business administration, environmental studies, criminal justice, nursing and teaching. Degrees were spread throughout our outstanding colleges, with 405 awarded in the College of Business, 397 in the College of Education and Human Services, 221 in the College of Nursing and 274 within other career-ready programs. Another 10 percent (200 degrees) were STEM degrees in the College of Letters and Science, degrees propelling a new wave of chemists, biologists, computer scientists, medical technicians and other experts into the workforce to improve Wisconsin's 21st quality of life and competitiveness in the global marketplace. Just as valuable are the creative talents and contributions of our approximately 600 other artist, writer, communication and social scientist graduates, not to mention those students who will continue graduate study in fields such as law, medicine, engineering, the humanities and the social sciences. In total, these more than 2,100 graduates will be improving the economy and serving as community leaders.
- **Young alumni surveyed in 2010 said their education was worth the price.** Ninety-four percent of UW Oshkosh students felt their college education was

worth the time and money compared to 89 percent nationally. And 90 percent of UW Oshkosh young alumni also said they were charged a “fair price” for their college education, far exceeding the 76 percent response in the national sample.

- **UW Oshkosh has launched dozens of entrepreneurial and innovative economic development programs and initiatives**, directly deploying faculty and staff knowledge and expertise and enhancing student learning in the name of regional economic and community development. A few include:
 - Our distinctive Wisconsin Family Business Forum and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) within the College of Business provided assistance to more than 37 Wisconsin family businesses and nearly 160 other businesses in 2010-11.
 - Our Business Success Center's staff and students assisted 78 companies in our region in 2010, offering consulting and survey expertise.
 - Nursing and human services interns who are helping Wisconsin serve its neediest populations in community-based clinics and shelters devoted to providing low-to-no cost health care and safety to thousands of residents.
- **UW Oshkosh is a founding member and active participant in New North, Inc. and the Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance (NEW ERA).** New North represents a collaboration of 18 counties — business leaders, economic development groups, educational leaders and civic groups — to advance job growth and economic vitality in the region. NEW ERA is a decade-old consortium of 13 publicly-supported educational institutions that share resources to better meet the needs of their constituencies through degree program articulations, business entrepreneurship centers, graduation projects and alternative licensure/certification programs for much needed nurses and teachers. In addition to serving as a major facilitator in regional collaborations and partnerships throughout the New North, UW Oshkosh's direct economic impact on the region is undeniable.
 - A 2009 study found UW Oshkosh's impact was approximately one-half-billion dollars a year. Since that examination, and despite the economic slowdown, we believe that total now far exceeds \$500 million a year.
 - The 2009 study also found UW Oshkosh, one of the state's fastest-growing universities, annually yields, directly and indirectly, 9,000 jobs. By the most recent tally, the University also generates an additional \$37.5 million in tax revenue for Wisconsin.

Our graduates have told us that their investment in a UW Oshkosh education prepared them for success in a challenging economy. Our regional partnerships are helping reenergize enterprise. We believe UW Oshkosh makes the ongoing case for strong support from Wisconsin's stewards, the taxpayers and donors of our state. Their return on investment is prolonged economic prosperity and enhanced quality of life.

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today>

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National study reveals recent UW Oshkosh grads are very pleased with their education

An overwhelming number of University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's young alumni believe that their education at the state's third-largest university was an excellent investment.

UW Oshkosh, along with 10 other UW System four-year campuses, recently participated in a national survey of young alumni, ages 25-39, conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE).

Terry Hartle, ACE's senior vice president of government and public affairs, presented the survey results last week to the UW System Board of Regents, calling the findings "stunning" and "extraordinary."

"I was especially pleased but not surprised with Hartle's characterization that young alumni from UW System schools such as UW Oshkosh have exceptionally high opinions of their alma maters compared with the national average. This is a strong affirmation of the deep commitment of UW Oshkosh faculty and staff to our students." UW Oshkosh Chancellor Richard H. Wells said.

Four hundred alumni from each participating institution were asked about their educational experiences, and their overall view of American colleges and universities.

"On its own, this survey is encouraging. Taken together with other data, it paints a very positive picture about the University's contribution to our citizens' success," said UW System President Kevin P. Reilly.

"We're serving more students than ever before, with nearly 182,000 students enrolled at 26 campuses. From a review of our alumni records, we know that Wisconsin residents who attend a UW System school are very likely to remain in the state, putting their college education to good use," he added.

UW Oshkosh has nearly 80,000 alumni worldwide, with more than 1,000 students set to receive their diplomas at the midyear commencement ceremony 9:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 18, at Kolf Sports Center.

The ACE survey showed that 97 percent of UW Oshkosh graduates reported high approvals compared with the national average of 88 percent. In addition, 94 percent of UW Oshkosh alumni (compared with the national average of 89 percent) thought time dedicated to degree and money spent on tuition was worth it.

"It is satisfying to know that our young alumni think highly of their alma mater and feel the time and money spent earning their degree was worth the investment," said UW Oshkosh Alumni Director Christine Gantner. "Our role in Alumni Relations is to help these alumni continue to benefit from a life-long connection with their alma mater."

Ninety percent of UW Oshkosh graduates surveyed agreed that their alma mater charged a "fair price" for their education. The national average was 76 percent.

UW Oshkosh alumni topped the national average on two additional measures: 72 percent (compared with 61 percent nationally) believe that "America's colleges and universities are prepared to meet the challenges of the future;" and 69 percent (62 percent nationally) think that "colleges and universities are adequately preparing students for the demands of the future."

Eight out of 10 (80 percent) UW Oshkosh graduates said they were "effectively prepared with the knowledge and skills they needed" — just one percentage point below the national average of 81 percent.

As part of the UW System's Growth Agenda for Wisconsin, all UW institutions are striving to increase the number of well-prepared college graduates and create more better-paying jobs in Wisconsin.

"Moving forward, it is critical that the State of Wisconsin continues to support our excellent educational offerings to ensure that our future alumni prosper as well," Chancellor Wells said.